



ISTEP+: Grade 4

English/Language Arts

Released Items and Scoring Notes

Writing Prompt
Standard 5: Writing Applications
Standard 6: Language Conventions

1

A New Ability

Read the writing prompt below and complete the writing activity.

Imagine that you wake up one morning to find that you can do something you have never been able to do before. It might be something you have always wanted to be able to do, or it might be something completely new. It might be a musical talent, a privilege, or something related to school, home, or friends.

Write a story about your discovery.

Be sure to include

- what you suddenly discover you are able to do
- how you feel about the discovery
- what is interesting or exciting about the new ability
- clear, strong details to make your story more interesting
- a beginning, a middle, and an end to your story

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 6	
A Score Point 6 paper is rare. It fully accomplishes the task and has a distinctive quality that sets it apart as an outstanding performance.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing stay fully focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stay on the topic? • avoid rambling and/or repeating information? <p>Does the writing sample include thorough and complete ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include in-depth information and supporting details? • fully explore many facets of the topic? 	
Organization	
<p>Does the writing have clear order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow a clear sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end? • have a logical progression of main ideas and support? 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit exceptional word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include dynamic words and provide rich details, strong verbs, and/or vivid descriptions? • demonstrate control of a challenging vocabulary? <p>Is the writing fluent and easy to read? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound natural? • include varied sentence patterns? (Writing may include complex sentence patterns.) <p>Does the writing sample display a strong sense of audience? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a unique perspective? It may be original, lively, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have a clear voice). 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 5	
A Score Point 5 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task, but lacks the overall level of sophistication and consistency of a Score Point 6 paper.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing stay focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stay on the topic? • very seldom ramble and/or repeat information? <p>Does the writing sample include many relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide some in-depth information? • provide supporting details? • explore many facets of the topic? 	
Organization	
<p>Does the writing have clear order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow a clear sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end? • have a logical progression of main ideas and support? 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit more than adequate word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include dynamic words and use vivid or challenging words? <p>Is the writing fluent and easy to read? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound natural? • include varied sentence patterns? (Writing may include complex sentences.) <p>Does the writing sample display a sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing may have a unique perspective. It may be original, lively, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have voice). 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 4

A Score Point 4 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing stay mostly focused?

- Does it mostly stay on the topic? (Writing may include minor tangents.)
- Writing may include some rambling and/or repetition.

Does the writing sample include some relevant ideas and information?

- Does it present related information?
- Writing may not fully develop details; it may list ideas with some detail.

Organization

Does the writing have order? Does it

- follow a sequence, but possibly show a lapse (e.g., may start out with a clear beginning, but wander; may be missing a beginning, but have a conclusion)?
- have a logical progression of main ideas and support? (Writing may have lapses.)

Style

Does the writing sample exhibit adequate word usage? Does it

- include mostly ordinary/common words (although some vivid or challenging words may be used)?

Is the writing readable? Does it

- flow naturally most of the time (although it may be choppy or repetitive or may have run-on sentences/fragments in spots)?
- generally lack varied sentence patterns (although it may include some complex sentences)?

Does the writing sample display some sense of audience?

- Is there an attempt to develop a unique perspective—original, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have some voice)?

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 3

A Score Point 3 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing stay somewhat focused?

- Does it stay minimally focused on topic? (Writer may get distracted; may have a lapse in focus.)
- Writing may ramble and/or repeat information.

Does the writing sample include some relevant ideas? Does it

- provide minimal information and not begin to exhaust the possibilities?
- provide minimal details, but does not develop details?

Organization

Does the writing have some order? Does it

- show minimal evidence of logical sequence (e.g., may be missing a beginning, a middle, or an end)?
- require the reader to fill in gaps in the sequence?

Style

Does the writing sample exhibit minimal word usage? Does it

- contain ordinary/common words?
- exhibit minimal evidence of word choice?

Is the writing mostly readable?

- Writing may be difficult to follow in some sections.
- Writing may be hard to understand; the connection of ideas and information may be unclear.
- Does the writing lack sentence variety?

Does the writing display little sense of audience?

- Writing may be repetitive, predictable, and/or dull (i.e., have minimal voice).

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 2	
<p>A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.</p>	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing exhibit less than minimal focus?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer may get distracted or drift away from topic. • Topic may not be developed. <p>Does the writing sample include few relevant ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing may include unfinished/fragmented ideas. • Writing may include only one or two bits of information. 	
Organization	
<p>Does writing have little order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show little evidence of logical sequence (e.g., have no clear beginning, middle, or end)? • have some ideas that may not be related to each other? 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit less than minimal word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contain ordinary/common words? • show no evidence of attention to word choice? <p>Is the writing hard to read?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader may have to fill in gaps or guess what the writer was trying to say. • Does the writing lack sentence variety? <p>Does the writing sample display little sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text may be flat, lifeless (i.e., have no voice). 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 1	
<p>A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that fails to accomplish the task. It exhibits considerable difficulty in areas of development, organization, and writing style. The writing is generally either very brief or rambling and repetitive, sometimes resulting in a response that may be difficult to read or comprehend.</p>	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing have little or no focus on topic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content may convey little meaning. <p>Does the writing sample include almost no relevant ideas and information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing may contain unfinished ideas. • Writing is likely to be brief. 	
Organization	
<p>Does writing have little or no order?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it lack the sequence of a beginning, a middle, and an end? • Writing may have ideas that are not related to each other. 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit less than minimal word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contain a very limited and simple vocabulary? <p>Is the writing hard to read?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is sentence construction frequently incorrect? <p>Does the writing sample display little or no sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing may be flat and lifeless (i.e., have no voice). 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Language Conventions Rubric Grades 3–4

In their writing, students will apply the Standard English conventions defined in the Indiana Academic Standards for their grade and all previous grades.

Score	Does writing exhibit a very good command of language skills?
4	<p>In a Score Point 4 paper, there are no errors that impair the flow of communication. Errors that appear will generally be of the first-draft variety; they have a minor impact on the overall communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there few or no errors in beginning capitalization? • Are there few or no errors in capitalization of proper nouns? • Are there few or no errors in ending punctuation? • Are there few or no errors in subject and verb agreement? • Are there few or no errors in the spelling of grade-level-appropriate words? • Does writing have few or no run-on sentences or sentence fragments?
Score	Does writing exhibit an adequate command of language skills?
3	<p>In a Score Point 3 paper, errors are occasional but do not impede the flow of communication; the writer's meaning is not seriously obscured by language errors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is most beginning capitalization correct? • Are most proper nouns capitalized correctly? • Do most sentences end with correct punctuation? • Do most sentences have correct subject and verb agreement? • Are most grade-level-appropriate words spelled correctly? • Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does writing exhibit a minimal command of language skills?
2	<p>In a Score Point 2 paper, errors are generally frequent and may cause the reader to stop and reread part of the writing. While some aspects of the writing may be more consistently correct than others, the existing errors do impair communication. With a little extra effort on the reader's part, it is still possible to discern most, if not all, of what the writer is trying to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is some beginning capitalization correct? • Are some proper nouns capitalized correctly? • Do some sentences end with correct punctuation? • Do some sentences have correct subject and verb agreement? • Are some grade-level-appropriate words spelled correctly? • Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does writing exhibit a less than minimal command of language skills?
1	<p>In a Score Point 1 paper, errors are serious and numerous; they cause the reader to struggle to discern the writer's meaning. Errors are frequently of a wide variety. There may be sections where it is impossible to ascertain what the writer is attempting to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there many errors in beginning capitalization? • Does writing have little or no evidence of capitalization of proper nouns? • Is end punctuation missing or incorrect? • Are there many errors in subject and verb agreement? • Are there many errors in the spelling of grade-level-appropriate words? • Are there run-on sentences or sentence fragments?

NOTE: The elements of this rubric are applied holistically; no element is intended to supersede any other element. The variety and proportion of errors in relation to the length of the writing sample are considered.

**English/Language Arts
Constructed-Response Items**

Session three, English/Language Arts, contains a reading comprehension task. This task allows the students to demonstrate their understanding and comprehension of narrative or informational text. The reading comprehension task consists of one passage and several constructed-response (CR) questions. Because this is a reading comprehension task, all the information students need to answer the questions correctly is in the text. All responses should be based on information from the text and will be scored for reading comprehension *only*. The following pages show the CR questions.

An example of a top-score response is given for each CR question. The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.

**English/Language Arts
2-point Constructed-Response (CR) Rubric**

2 points	Proficient The response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The information given is text-based and relevant to the task.
1 point	Partially Proficient The response fulfills some of the requirements of the task, but some of the information may be too general, too simplistic, or not supported by the text.
0 point	Not Proficient The response does not fulfill the requirements of the task because it contains information that is inaccurate, incomplete, and/or missing altogether.

Constructed-Response
Standard 2: Reading Comprehension & Analysis of Informational Text

Question 1

- 1** What is the MAIN idea of the article? Support your answer with details from the article.

Top-Score Response:

The main idea of the article is that both cats and dogs can make great pets and there are reasons to like one more than another. Some people like dogs because they have a bigger brain and can learn more words than cats. Dogs can be trained to help blind people get around, help police catch robbers, and smell gas leaks and termites, and even smell cancer in medical patients. Cats cost less money to care for than dogs, and they don't depend much on people. They can also do amazing things with their bodies, like fall from high places without getting hurt.

***Note:** The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Constructed-Response
Standard 2: Reading Comprehension & Analysis of Informational Text

Question 2

- 2** The author compares and contrasts information about cats and dogs. Explain why this is a helpful way to present the information. Support your answer with details from the article.

Top-Score Response:

Comparing and contrasting the information is the best way to organize the information because it is easier to understand and helps the reader know the main differences between cats and dogs. For example, the author says that dogs can learn about 165 words, but cats can learn about 35 words. Dogs can be trained to do many kinds of work, but cats mostly just lie around and sleep. Dogs usually need more attention from their owners, but cats are more independent and can take care of themselves.

***Note:** The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Constructed-Response
Standard 2: Reading Comprehension & Analysis of Informational Text

Question 3

- 3** According to the article, why do more people choose dogs instead of cats as pets? Support your answer with details from the article.

Top-Score Response:

Dogs are more able than cats to understand what people say to them. They can be trained easily they like people to talk to them. Cats are more independent. They are better hunters but most people don't need a pet to hunt. People want a friendly pet to love and play with, and dogs are usually friendlier than cats.

***Note:** The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Extended-Response
Standard 5: Writing Applications
Standard 6: Language Conventions

Question 4

4 Read this story. Then complete the writing activity that follows.

The Jungle

Tyler and Logan had been walking for what felt like miles. The trees seemed to be growing closer together, allowing only a little bit of light to come in. Large leaves rustled against their faces. Every once in a while, the sound of an animal would startle them. Once, Tyler lost his footing on some slippery leaves.

As the path curved ahead, a clearing opened up. It was filled with beautiful flowers and a brook. They both stopped to drink the water.

On the other side of the clearing, leaves filled the path again. Tyler wondered what they would find on the other side.

Write an ending for this story. Describe what happens after Logan and Tyler follow the path on the other side of the clearing. Be sure to include details to support your writing. You do NOT need to rewrite the beginning of the story.

Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 4	
A Score Point 4 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing stay fully focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stay on the topic? • avoid rambling or repeating information? <p>Does the writing sample include many relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide ample information? • provide many supporting details? • explore many facets of the topic? 	
Organization	
<p>Does the writing have clear order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow a clear sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end? • have a logical progression of main ideas and support? 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit more than adequate word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include dynamic words and use vivid or challenging words? <p>Is the writing fluent and easy to read? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound natural? • include varied sentence patterns? (Writing may include complex sentences.) <p>Does the writing sample display a sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing may have a unique perspective. It may be original, lively, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have voice). 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 3	
A Score Point 3 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing stay mostly focused? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mostly stay on the topic? (Writing may include minor tangents.) • include some rambling and/or repetition? <p>Does the writing sample include relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present related information? • provide some supporting details? 	
Organization	
<p>Does the writing have order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow a sequence, but possibly show a lapse (e.g., may start out with a clear beginning, but wander; may be missing a beginning, but have a conclusion)? • have a logical progression of main ideas and support? (Writing may have lapses.) 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit adequate word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include mostly ordinary/common words (although some vivid or challenging words may be used)? <p>Is the writing readable? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flow naturally most of the time (although it may be choppy or repetitive or may have run-on sentences/fragments in spots)? • generally lack varied sentence patterns (although it may include some complex sentences)? <p>Does the writing display some sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an attempt to develop a unique perspective—original, authoritative, and/or interesting (i.e., have some voice)? 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 2

A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing stay somewhat focused? Does it

- stay minimally focused on topic? (Writer may get distracted; may have a lapse in focus.)
- ramble and/or repeat information?

Does the writing sample include some relevant ideas? Does it

- provide minimal information and not begin to exhaust the possibilities?
- provide minimal details, but does not develop details?

Organization

Does the writing have some order? Does it

- show minimal evidence of logical sequence (e.g., may be missing a beginning, a middle, or an end)?
- require the reader to fill in gaps in the sequence?

Style

Does the writing sample exhibit minimal word usage? Does it

- contain ordinary/common words?
- exhibit minimal evidence of word choice?

Is the writing mostly readable?

- Writing may be difficult to follow in some sections.
- Writing may be hard to understand; the connection of ideas and information may be unclear.
- Does the writing lack sentence variety?

Does the writing display little sense of audience?

- Writing may be repetitive, predictable, and/or dull (i.e., have minimal voice).

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric Grades 3–4

SCORE POINT 1	
<p>A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes or fails to accomplish the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.</p>	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing exhibit little or no focus?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer may get distracted, may drift away from topic, or may convey little meaning. • Topic may not be developed. <p>Does the writing sample include few or no relevant ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing may include unfinished/fragmented ideas. • Writing may include only one or two bits of information. 	
Organization	
<p>Does writing have little or no order? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show little evidence of logical sequence (e.g., have no clear beginning, middle, or end)? • have some ideas that may not be related to each other? 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit less than minimal word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contain a limited or simple vocabulary? • show no evidence of attention to word choice? <p>Is the writing hard to read?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader may have to fill in gaps or guess what the writer was trying to say. • Is sentence construction frequently incorrect? <p>Does the writing sample display little or no sense of audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text may be flat, lifeless (i.e., have no voice). 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 3–4.

Language Conventions Rubric Grades 3–4

In their writing, students will apply the Standard English conventions defined in the Indiana Academic Standards for their grade and all previous grades.

Score	Does writing exhibit a very good command of language skills?
4	<p>In a Score Point 4 paper, there are no errors that impair the flow of communication. Errors that appear will generally be of the first-draft variety; they have a minor impact on the overall communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there few or no errors in beginning capitalization? • Are there few or no errors in capitalization of proper nouns? • Are there few or no errors in ending punctuation? • Are there few or no errors in subject and verb agreement? • Are there few or no errors in the spelling of grade-level-appropriate words? • Does writing have few or no run-on sentences or sentence fragments?
Score	Does writing exhibit an adequate command of language skills?
3	<p>In a Score Point 3 paper, errors are occasional but do not impede the flow of communication; the writer's meaning is not seriously obscured by language errors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is most beginning capitalization correct? • Are most proper nouns capitalized correctly? • Do most sentences end with correct punctuation? • Do most sentences have correct subject and verb agreement? • Are most grade-level-appropriate words spelled correctly? • Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does writing exhibit a minimal command of language skills?
2	<p>In a Score Point 2 paper, errors are generally frequent and may cause the reader to stop and reread part of the writing. While some aspects of the writing may be more consistently correct than others, the existing errors do impair communication. With a little extra effort on the reader's part, it is still possible to discern most, if not all, of what the writer is trying to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is some beginning capitalization correct? • Are some proper nouns capitalized correctly? • Do some sentences end with correct punctuation? • Do some sentences have correct subject and verb agreement? • Are some grade-level-appropriate words spelled correctly? • Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does writing exhibit a less than minimal command of language skills?
1	<p>In a Score Point 1 paper, errors are serious and numerous; they cause the reader to struggle to discern the writer's meaning. Errors are frequently of a wide variety. There may be sections where it is impossible to ascertain what the writer is attempting to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there many errors in beginning capitalization? • Does writing have little or no evidence of capitalization of proper nouns? • Is end punctuation missing or incorrect? • Are there many errors in subject and verb agreement? • Are there many errors in the spelling of grade-level-appropriate words? • Are there run-on sentences or sentence fragments?

NOTE: The elements of this rubric are applied holistically; no element is intended to supersede any other element. The variety and proportion of errors in relation to the length of the writing sample are considered.